

# Renting Disney Vacation Club Points: Making Disney Budget-Friendly

by Carol Yeh, PassPorter Guest Contributor

Since 2008, my family has taken an "annual pilgrimage" to Walt Disney World.

We had always opted for a moderate-level resort so we could stay in the "Disney bubble" without breaking the bank. When it came time to book our 2013 trip, I decided to research how to get the most bang for our buck. After comparing various on-site and off-site accommodations, my family decided to rent Disney Vacation Club (DVC) points at the Beach Club Villas.

The DVC resorts in Orlando are equivalent to deluxe accommodations. Depending on the resort, guests can opt to stay in a studio (which accommodates up to 4 individuals), or a one-, two-, or three-bedroom villa (which accommodate 4-12 individuals). The villas each have full kitchens and in-room washers and dryers, while the studios offer a kitchenette.

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## □ Renting Options

□ Most people rent DVC points one of two ways: by working directly with DVC owners, or by going through a rental company, such as David's Vacation Club Rentals ([www.dvcrequest.com](http://www.dvcrequest.com)) or DVC Rental Store ([www.dvcrentalstore.com](http://www.dvcrentalstore.com)). You can find individual DVC owners on sites such as [www.mouseowners.com](http://www.mouseowners.com) or through general timeshare websites.

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□ The most important issue to keep in mind is that you must depend entirely on the DVC owner to make the reservation for you and to add on such features as the dining plan. So, if you choose to work directly with DVC owners, it is important to vet them for reliability and responsiveness. For this reason, my family opted to work through a rental company, because it added a layer of security by ensuring the DVC owners held up to their part of the agreement.

Currently, most rental companies charge \$12-\$13 per point, and points are based on the type of accommodation you choose and the season. Some companies ask for a deposit to search for an available rental, while others will search their inventory for free. In my family's case, we submitted a request and received a response within four hours. I could hardly believe that at breakfast, we were dreaming of going to Disney and by lunch, we were booked!

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## □ Important Considerations

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□ Renting DVC points differs from reserving a Disney resort room in a few, important ways. Essentially, the DVC rental gets you the room only. You must put the rest of your vacation package together a la carte.

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□ For park tickets, most DVC rental companies will direct you to online ticket vendors, such as [Undercove tourist.com](http://Undercove tourist.com), but you can purchase them from whichever vendor you choose. At resort check-in, you can add your park tickets to your Key to the World Card and enjoy all the perks that come with it, such as Extra Magic Hours and room charging privileges.

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□ If you want the Disney Dining Plan, you must rely on the DVC owner to add it to your reservation. Rental companies will act as the go-between, taking your form of payment and passing it along to the DVC owner.

The fastest and safest way to complete this transaction is to purchase a Disney gift card with the dining plan amount; the rental companies can help you calculate the total.

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□ Finally, because all DVC rentals are final -- meaning no cancellations or changes to your reservation -- you may want to consider trip insurance. Again, rental companies will point you to online brokers, but you may use whichever broker you wish.

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□ Staying in a Disney Vacation Club Resort

□ Once you get to your DVC resort, it will feel almost exactly like being at a regular Disney resort. Again, there are a few differences worth considering.

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□ First, housekeeping does not visit daily. For stays of less than eight days, housekeeping will service the room on Day 4 of your reservation. For stays of longer than eight days, housekeeping comes on days 4 and 8. Additional servicing and towels may be requested for a fee. In my family's case, with two young children, I found myself tidying the room everyday. Mostly, I made sure towels were hung up properly, and we emptied the trash and recycling bins ourselves on Day 3. However, these small efforts were not a big deal, as they're part of our regular at-home routine.

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□ The studios and one-bedroom villas have only one real bed. The other bed is a pull-out sofa bed. If having real beds for everyone in your party is important, you may want to consider upgrading to a two-bedroom villa. Also, having a sofa bed means a little extra work to get the bed ready at night and make the room functional in the morning. Luckily, Disney's sofa beds are well-designed and include hidden compartments to store the extra pillows and blankets. My family found it helpful to remove the mattress from the sofa bed and place it on the floor like a

futon for a better night's sleep.

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□For folks who like to pack light, DVC resorts offer free washers and dryers to their guests. In the villas, the units are in-room, and Disney provides detergent. For studio guests, the resorts provide a laundry room on each floor with large capacity front-loaders. Although the machines themselves are free to use, guests must purchase detergent from the laundry room vending machines or bring their own from home.

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□Finally, the kitchen/kitchenette area can be a benefit for some families. Our kitchenette came stocked with a toaster, microwave, and coffee maker, as well as paper plates and plastic utensils. We found these supplies especially useful for in-room breakfast and snacks. I particularly like that DVC rooms also come stocked with dish soap, sponges, and dish towels. It was nice to clean our refillable mugs thoroughly each day!

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□Final Impressions

□My family rented a studio at the Beach Club Villas, because we loved the idea of being able to walk to Epcot. It really made a difference in how we planned our days (midday breaks and splitting up the family was so much easier) and how much we enjoyed our trip.

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□We missed having two queen-sized beds, like we've had at our favorite moderate resort, Port Orleans French Quarter. However, the other amenities -- free laundry, kitchenette, and proximity to Epcot -- tips us in favor of renting again. Cost-wise, renting was slightly more expensive than a moderate-level resort stay, but the difference is easily made up by the other factors, such as location and resort atmosphere. We are already looking ahead to 2014 and plan to rent another magical stay at a DVC resort!

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